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Records Management Survey Report
of the
Office of the Director
20 May 1958

I. PURPOSE

To study the efficiency of the records systems and the mail and file activities of the Executive Registry.

II. BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

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At the request of the Executive Officer, DCI, a survey was started on 25 March 1958. [redacted] was assigned to conduct the study which began in Executive Registry and extended to all components of DCI served by the Registry.

III. FACTS

The mail handling and file systems of the Executive Registry have developed over the years as an outgrowth of the various requirements placed on them from the components they serve. This growth of systems has been without benefit of an approved policy or plan and operates with such flexibility that extensive on-the-job training for new employees is necessary before they are competent in each of the many tasks. Certain tasks are overlapping within the Registry as well as in the offices served by them. Also the high rate of turnover in employees creates a hardship in maintaining a well trained staff. Offices in general were complimentary of the Registry for the service received. However, there was some criticism concerning the dispatch of mail.

IV. CONCLUSION

That tasks performed by Executive Registry should be streamlined and modernized and that planned systems and procedures, developed as an approved policy, would improve efficiency.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations summarized below appear in detail together with supporting data behind the tabs indicated;

1. Install subject-numeric file system in Executive Registry. (Tab 1)
2. Establish offices of record. (Tab 2)
3. Cut off and retire records periodically. (Tab 3)
4. Use standard folders and guides. (Tab 4)
5. Combine logging and abstract card preparation. (Tab 5)
6. Convert TS logging to a card system. (Tab 6)
7. Destroy logs (secret and below) after one year. (Tab 7)
8. Procure mechanized equipment for control records. (Tab 8)
9. Approve Dispatch Guide as policy. (Tab 9)

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10. Revise cable logging procedures. (Tab 10)
11. Discontinue Summary of DCI Actions. (Tab 11)
12. Adopt color copies to denote record, chrono, and information copies. (Tab 12)
13. Reduce official T/O of Executive Registry. (Tab 13)

8 - T/O
7 - on duty

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1. THAT THE SUBJECT-NUMERIC FILE SYSTEM OUTLINED IN [redacted] BE INSTALLED IN THE CORRESPONDENCE FILES OF EXECUTIVE REGISTRY. 25X1

The present system of filing in Executive Registry is primarily one of source (Agency, Office or individual by name). Direct access to the documents in file is therefore limited to a requester's knowledge of the originator or addressee of a document. As an aid in locating requests received by subject, abstract cards prepared as cross references, are filed by subject.

The subject-numeric file system outlined in [redacted] was adopted by the Agency as the file plan for the files maintained for the heads of all organizational levels. During the past four years this system has grown in its acceptance throughout the Agency to cover over 176 separate installations in headquarters or over 50% of the Agency's potential. In a visit to the Registries serving the Secretary of the Navy and the Administrator, General Services Administration, we found that the subject-numeric file system was excellent for their research requirements. The subject-numeric system would benefit your office as follows: 25X1

a. Provide direct accessibility to documents by subject requests.

b. Bring together all related material regardless of source.

c. Provide a standard file classification plan that (1) is not affected by personnel turnover, and (2) makes available to the Registry a source for replacements from the more than [redacted] headquarters personnel now trained in the system. 25X1

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2. THAT CERTAIN OFFICES OF THE DCI AND CERTAIN OFFICES BEING SERVICED BY THE EXECUTIVE REGISTRY BE ESTABLISHED AS THE OFFICE OF RECORD FOR THEIR FUNCTIONS.

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Records Control Schedules now in effect have designated components of the Office of DCI and certain components serviced by the Executive Registry as the offices of record for material received, originated, or signed by them. These components are: Inspector General, Cable Secretariat, and Deputy Director Intelligence. In addition to the above offices, it is recommended that Records Control Schedules be developed to designate the following components as offices of record for their material: Special Assistant for Planning and Development (Mr. Bissell), Special Assistant [redacted] and Administrative Officer [redacted]. These offices have indicated that they now have the complete record of their activity and do not use the files of Executive Registry.

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Recommend that Executive Registry therefore be established as the office of record for the immediate office of the DCI to include only the following: DDCI, Executive Officer, Assistants to, and the DDC. Furthermore, that material now maintained in the Registry organizational files on components other than the above be offered to these components for their retention or destruction, as they already have duplicates of these records in their files. An exception to this would be the retention by the Executive Registry of copies of correspondence signed by the Director or Deputy Director or any official in the immediate office of DCI.

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3. THAT CORRESPONDENCE FILES OF EXECUTIVE REGISTRY BE TERMINATED AT THE END OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR AND THAT THE TERMINATED BLOC OF ANNUAL FILES BE TRANSFERRED TO THE RECORDS CENTER TWO YEARS AFTER TERMINATION FOR PERMANENT PRESERVATION.

A records disposition plan for systematic removal of inactive records is the best answer to the problem of ever-expanding files. Eventually all files should reach the ultimate when the volume of inactive files removed annually is equal to the volume created during the same period. Annual cut-off and retirement of inactive files have wide acceptance throughout the government as well as in the Agency. Although the retention period recommended (the current year plus the two preceding years) is somewhat arbitrary, even shorter periods are proving sufficient in many offices of the Agency. The cut-off and retirement plan would provide the following benefits:

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a. Reduce volume and save floor and safe space. Several safes could be returned to supply for reissue.

b. Facilitate search for current records by eliminating old and inactive material.

c. Eliminate screening individual papers which is time consuming and costly.

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4. THAT STANDARD FOLDERS AND GUIDES BE ADOPTED FOR USE IN THE EXECUTIVE REGISTRY.

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By Agency Notice [redacted] standard folders and guides were adopted for use throughout the Agency. This reduced procuring and stocking of over 64 types of folders to 9 standard items. Most of the folders presently used in Executive Registry are the double pressboard folders which cost 25¢ each as compared with the 2¢ cost for the standard folder. The standard folder has wide acceptance in the Agency and is used in many active operational files. Such folders would stand the wear and activity of the files during their retention period in the office and serve adequately for storage at the Records Center when inactive. The principal benefits are those of economy and are as follows:

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a. Savings of 23¢ on each folder.

b. A gain of one foot of file space for every four drawers now using double pressboard folders.

c. Standard folders are always available in building supply offices.

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5. THAT LOGGING OF DOCUMENTS AND PREPARATION OF ABSTRACT CARDS BE COMBINED INTO ONE OPERATION AND THAT ALL LOGGING BE CONVERTED TO CARD FORMS.

Although a central mail control system recording the movement of each paper through an office is desirable, it is not feasible to establish a central control system in the ODCI and still maintain the "need to know" policy. Sensitive mail comes in and goes out in sealed envelopes with no record of the contents maintained in Executive Registry. Also, certain mail is forwarded unopened direct to addressee and logging is limited to the recording of information on the envelope. Mail that is opened is entered in a log book by recording the following: ER number, from or to, classification, date, and subject. The log entry is then used to enter the same information on a 3-part card form (Abstract Cards) which serve as cross-references. By combining the two operations and without additional effort for the one operation of preparing abstract cards, one copy of the abstract cards can serve as a log. See process chart (Attachment A).

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Miscellaneous documents such as publications, Isthmus, etc., which are not assigned an ER number are recorded in various log books maintained for each category of documents. This method of logging is a slow and cumbersome operation and access to the logs is limited. By converting to the use of cards in lieu of log books a more flexible system of maintenance could be achieved which would speed up the recording and retrieving operation.

In addition, and as a form of control, it is recommended that the log cards be filed in a suspense file until the document is received in Executive Registry for file. At that time the cards should be removed from the suspense file and filed in a completed file.

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MAIL CONTROL PROCESS

EXECUTIVE REGISTRY

RECEIVE

INCOMING MAIL

OPEN
TIME STAMP
SORT
LOG PERSONAL MAIL (ENVELOPE ONLY)

CONTROL

ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER
COURTESY

ASSIGN E R NO. ENTER IN APPROPRIATE LOG.

LOG | BOOK

CROSS REFERENCE

LOG | BOOK

PREPARE CROSS-REFERENCES FROM LOG ENTRIES

SUBJ.
SOURCE
NAME
CHRONO

FILE

SUBJ.
SOURCE
NAME
CHRONO

FILE CROSS-REF. IN APPROPRIATE FILE

RESEARCH

ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER
COURTESY
ER FILE

CHECK REFERENCES TO PREVIOUS LETTERS. ATTACH E R FILE

ACTION DESK

ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER
COURTESY
ORIGINAL REPLY
COURTESY REPLY
INFO. REPLY
INFO. REPLY
FILE COPY OF REPLY
CHRONO COPY OF REPLY
ER FILE

(PREPARE REPLY, REFER TO OTHERS FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY, SIGN, FILE IN OWN FILES OR SEND TO E R FOR FILE IF NO ACTION REQUIRED, OR FORWARD TO EXECUTIVE OFF. FOR HIGHER SIG.)

RETAIN CHRONO COPY

CHRONO COPY OF REPLY

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER
ORIGINAL REPLY

(REVIEWS, SIGNS, OR OBTAINS SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR)

ADMIN OFFICER

ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER
ORIGINAL REPLY

COURTESY INCOMING LETTER
COURTESY REPLY
INFO. COPY REPLY
INFO. COPY REPLY
FILE COPY OF REPLY
ER FILE

RECEIVES MISC. PAPERS & HOLDS IN SUSPENSE UNTIL RECEIPT OF SIGNED REPLY.
UPON RECEIPT OF SIGNED REPLY – REASSEMBLES
CHECKS COMPLETENESS
SENDS TO E R

CONT

ORIGINAL REPLY
COURTESY REPLY
INFO. REP
INFO. RE
ORIGINAL IN. LET
COURTE IN LET
FILE C OF RE
ER F

ENTER IN A PRIATE LOG

LOG | BC

PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION

CONTROL & CROSS REFERENCE

ASSIGN E R NUMBER PREPARE CONTROL AND CROSS-REFERENCES IN ONE OPERATION

SUBJ.
SOURCE
NAME
CHRONO

SUBJ.
SOURCE
NAME
CHRONO

FILE IN APPROPRIATE FILE. CHRONO CROSS-REFERENCE IS FILED BY E R NO. & SERVES IN LIEU OF LOG BOOK.

Same as Above

CONTR

ASSIGN E R NU
PREPARE CONT
REFERENCE IN
TION

SUBJ.
SOURCE
NAME
CHRONO

SECRET
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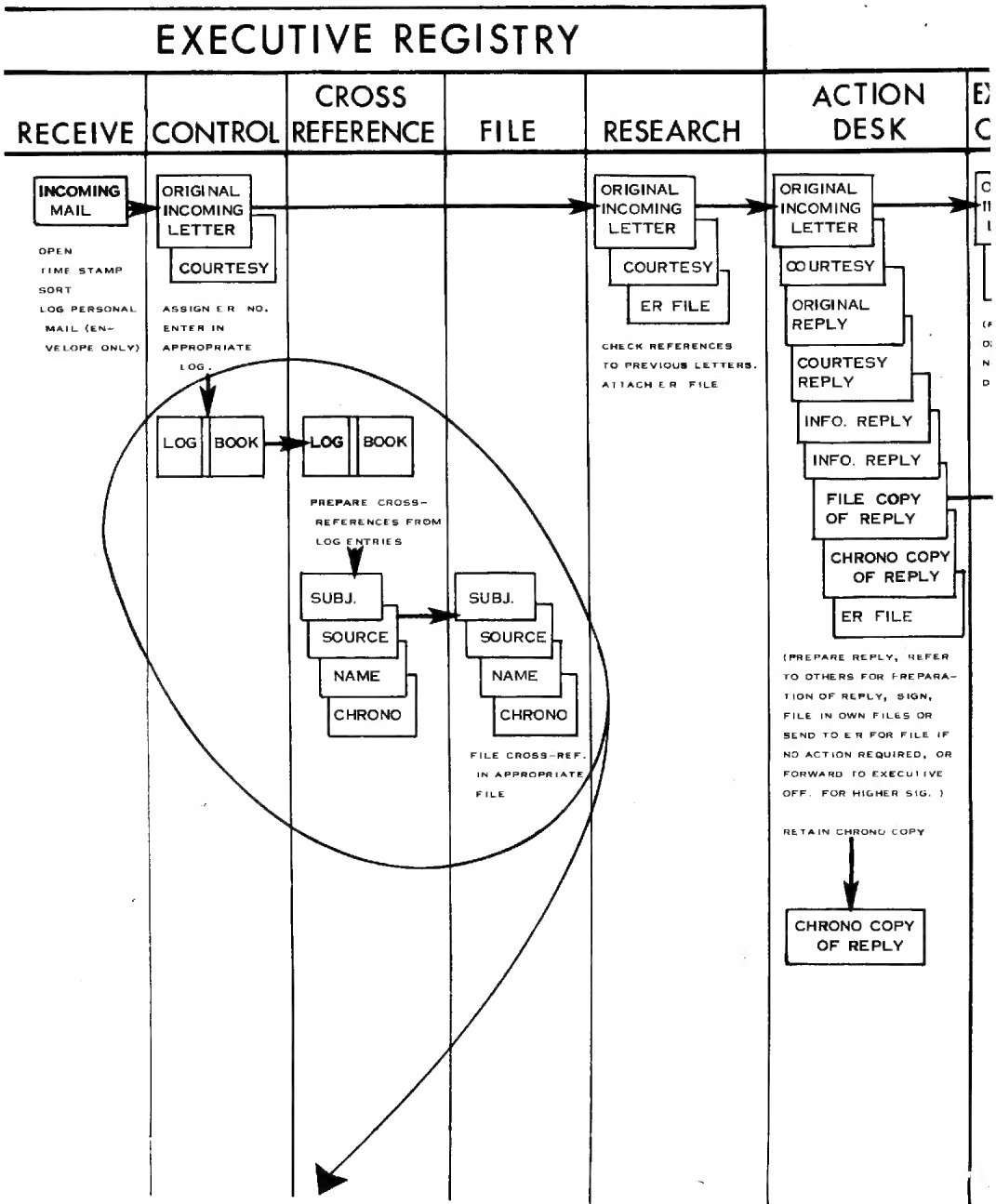
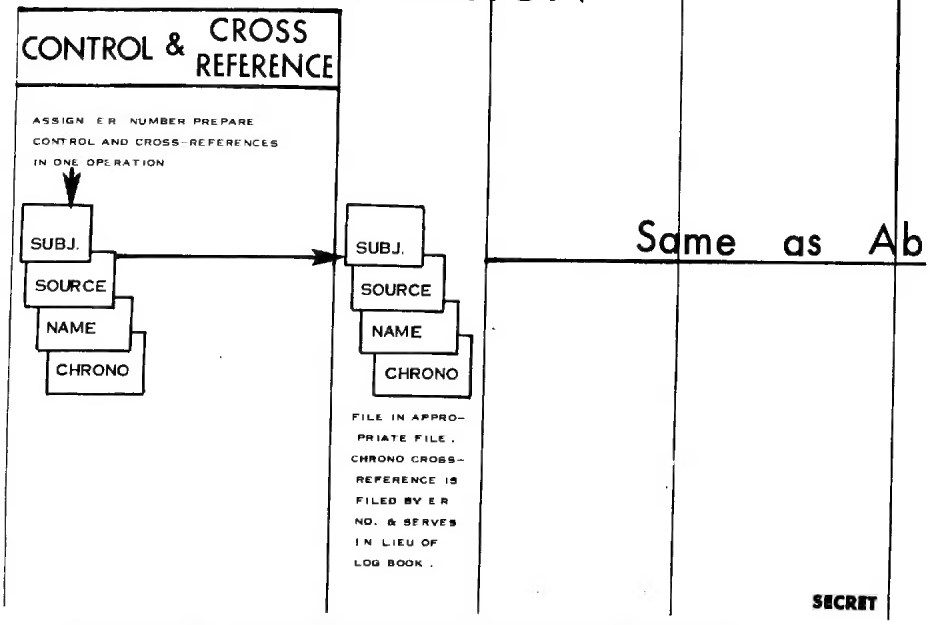
MAIL CONTRC

EXECUTIVE REGISTRY



PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION



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6. THAT THE PRESENT TS CONTROL SYSTEM BE CONVERTED TO A CARD SYSTEM.

The Executive Registry is adopting this recommendation. The use of a card TS Control System is suggested by the Agency Top Secret Control Officer. This system is presently used by several Area Top Secret Control Officers in the Agency. The benefits of a card control system are:

a. Provides a running inventory of all TS documents located in ODCI.

b. Provides a running inventory of all TS documents destroyed.

c. Provides a running inventory of all TS documents transferred outside the ODCI control point,

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7. THAT LOG BOOKS MAINTAINED IN EXECUTIVE REGISTRY ON MATERIAL CLASSIFIED SECRET AND BELOW BE DESTROYED AFTER A RETENTION OF ONE YEAR.

The Office of Security has approved the destruction of logs maintained on secret and below documents after a retention of one year. This authority has Agency-wide application and is in effect in most offices of the Agency. The present accumulation in Executive Registry requires the use of one 4-drawer safe. Chief benefit of this destruction is economy, i.e., savings of $423 in equipment plus floor space. If these logs cannot be destroyed at this time, it is suggested that they be transferred to the Records Center where the annual storage cost would be only $10.64.

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3. THAT MODERN MECHANIZED FILE EQUIPMENT BE PROCURED TO REPLACE THE 5 DRAWER CARD SAFES AND 4 DRAWER SAFES NOW USED FOR HOUSING CONTROL RECORDS.

The selection of the right piece of file equipment that would best serve the purpose and use of the file can often make the difference between failure and success of a system. Whereas the control operation in OEXI is not a large one in comparison with several other Agency mail room activities, accurate and speedy service is of utmost importance at this top organizational level. To expedite the control processes and to promote a more efficient service to the officials of OEXI, it is recommended that one Roto-File be procured at a cost of $2,500 to replace the present safe equipment now used. The dollar value of safes that could be returned to supply by adopting the Roto-File and by transferring inactive material to the Records Center would more than offset the procurement cost.

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9. THAT A DISPATCH GUIDE BE APPROVED AS THE STANDARD MAILING GUIDE FOR EXECUTIVE REGISTRY.

Getting the mail to the addressee in a rapid manner, consistent with security requirements and the urgency of the message, is one of the most responsible operations in a mail room. Errors made at this step are irreparable and could well harm relationships with other government agencies and individuals as well as cause a breach in security. In order to provide the Registry with an approved policy for dispatching mail from the Office of DCI, the "Dispatch Guide" (Attachment A) has been devised for your approval. The "Dispatch Guide" will provide the Registry with a standardized method of dispatching mail to addressees. If other than standard mailing methods are requested by an official, it would be the responsibility of his secretary to clearly indicate the special handling desired.

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DISPATCH GUIDE FOR EXECUTIVE REGISTRY

Addressee	ER Courier	CIA Courier	RUN-STOP	Pouch	US Post Office Mail	Special Instructions
WHITE HOUSE	X					
STATE DEPT. (Corres.) (Cables)	X X					Pick Up cables daily, Mon thru Fri DCI.DD/I 5220 State (8:30 AM)
IAC AGENCIES		X				
CONGRESS			X			
Government (Non IAC) (Classified)		X				
Government (Non IAC) (Unclassified)			X			
Isthmus				X		
FBI		X				Indicate Sam Papich, Liaison
25X1		X				Transmit to Development Project Staff, 1717 H St. for handling
25X1				X X		
Individual, Inst's. etc. (Unclassified)					X	
CIA INTERNAL Alian Affairs Off.						Phone [redacted] in order to pick up. 25X1
DD/P	X					Direct to Mr. Wisner & Mr. Helms.
DD/S	X					DCI/DD/S before 9:00
Personnel						Pick up by Mr. [redacted] 25X1
Payroll	X					Deliver before 3 PM Monday following pay day

Classified Mail sent via Registered Mail within Continental Limits of the United States.
Classified Mail sent by Pouch outside Continental Limits of United States.
Top Secret - Make Inquiry of Agency Top Secret Control Officer in each case when material is sent out of the Metropolitan Area.

Attachment A to Tab 9

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10. THAT CABLE HANDLING PROCEDURES BE CHANGED AS FOLLOWS:

a. That a copy of Cable Receipt (Form #253) be retained by [redacted] Office as a log in lieu of relisting cable numbers on Cable Information Log (Form #763). The revised form #253, which will be ready for use within a month, designates the blue copy of the receipt as the customer's copy. Since relisting a cable numbers is not done in numerical order but in the same order as on the receipt form, the copy of the receipt form should be adequate and thus eliminate this operation of relisting.

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b. That cable files maintained in [redacted] Office be added to the Records Control Schedulel prepared for ODCI. This will permit the bi-monthly destruction of the cable files without listing or checking individual documents (except Top Secret). The Office of Security has approved the bloc destruction of files without listing individual documents provided that a record of material destroyed is maintained which identifies the material with an item on the Records Control Schedule. This destruction can best be done by the Records Officer of ODCI.

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c. That the cable files be maintained as follows: one copy filed by post or station; one copy filed by last 3 digits of cable number. This will provide a 3-way access to the files as the Cable Receipt would furnish access by date of receipt.

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11. THAT THE DAILY SUMMARY OF DCI ACTIONS PREPARED BY EXECUTIVE REGISTRY BE DISCONTINUED OR THE CIRCULATION BE LIMITED.

Present procedures require that a copy of all correspondence signed by the Director be circulated among the officials of the office. Furthermore, offices outside the immediate Office of DCI are required to prepare an information copy for the DDCI of all correspondence prepared for the signature of the Director. Finally the Executive Registry prepares a summary of all papers signed by the Director for circulation to the same recipients on the following day. It is therefore recommended that the circulating copies be clearly marked and expedited and thus eliminate the preparations of the summary. In any event, personnal in the Office of the DDCI have indicated that they have no need for the summary prepared in Executive Registry.

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12. THAT COLOR COPIES BE USED MORE WIDELY TO DENOTE RECORD COPIES, CHRONO COPIES AND INFORMATION COPIES.

The Agency Correspondence Handbook [redacted] provides, among other things, the technique of using color copies to visually aid mail and file units. The yellow copy is suggested for the record copy, the pink for the chrono copy and the white for information copies. By adopting this procedure throughout the Office of DCI the value of the files can more easily be determined and recipients of information copies will depend upon the yellow copy as the official record. The chrono and information copies can then be destroyed as non record when no longer needed without verifying that a record copy exists.

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13. RECOMMEND THAT THE PRESENT T/O IN EXECUTIVE REGISTRY BE REDUCED BY ONE POSITION (FROM EIGHT TO SEVEN) AND THAT FUTURE VACANCIES BE FILLED BY EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEES FROM OTHER CIA REGISTRIES.

A study of the workload (Attachment A) shows that the number of items registered in Executive Registry has decreased by 14½% since 1955. During the same period, the on-board strength has decreased by 16 2/3% for other than courier personnel without creating a serious backlog. Assuming that the original T/O or staff was adequate, this indicates that the present on-board
25X1 strength [ ] is adequate for the expected workload in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the official T/O may safely be re-
25X1 duced by one position [ ]

Accurate and speedy management of mail at the Agency's highest organizational level is essential. Errors or delays in receiving, controlling, dispatching, or finding the mail could cause unnecessary embarrassment to the Director or his Staff. Therefore, Executive Registry positions should be staffed with the best qualified employees available from the Agency's many mail and registry units. Agency employees who are experienced in mail room activities and who have a good knowledge of Agency organization and functions should be selected in preference to inexperienced and possibly immature recruits who may be assigned to this important function on their first assignment in the Agency. The Executive Registry should not be a training ground for new clerks.

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Workloads in Executive Registry

		1955	1956	1957
Correspondence - Log		13,126	11,575	10,514
	ER	1,000	1,000	1,000
Publications	(Regular)	3,000	3,000	3,000
NIE	116			
[redacted]	49			
OCB	237			
SNIE	48			
IAC	104			
Misc. Reports	217			
Cables	175			
(Jan-Feb-Mar-Apr)	946			
Incoming Isthmus		393	700	666
Outgoing Isthmus		160	63	152
DS				
ER		810	894	716
CIA		1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTALS - - - -		19,954	18,232	17,048

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Attachment A to Tab 13

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